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Years in Cultural Studies

1968—A Turning Point in Cultural Studies

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ABSTRACT This essay traces how social movements throughout the globe in 1968 heavily influenced the development, operations, and identity of cultural studies. Thus, 1968 remains a critical turning point for cultural studies and its goals. To demonstrate this, global struggles contextualize the micro expressions of unrest at The University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Secondly, the essay examines how the discipline negotiated studies of marginalized and subaltern cultures within this social context. And finally, an analysis of key texts of 1968 demonstrates how the sociopolitical moment produced work that is emblematic of cultural studies' pursuits. Ultimately, the essay questions how our contemporary moment might necessitate new pursuits in scholarly praxis, like the moment of 1968 called forth new directions in cultural studies.

The year of 1968 remains a critical turning point for cultural studies because it was rife with social movements throughout the globe that altered understandings and experiences of nation, belonging, and peoplehood. We argue that these events heavily influenced the development, operations, and identity of cultural studies, as cultural studies interrogated the many dimensions of the sociopolitical moment. In this essay, we first contextualize the micro expressions of unrest in the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) through an analysis of the macro social events of the time. Secondly, we examine how the discipline negotiated studies of marginalized and subaltern cultures within this social context. And finally, we demonstrate how the sociopolitical moment produced key texts within cultural studies and texts to which scholars responded. Ultimately, we question how our contemporary moment might necessitate new pursuits in scholarly praxis, like the moment of 1968 called forth new directions in cultural studies.

Global Social Events, 1968

Student protests in Birmingham at the CCCS in 1968 were so influential that scholars have articulated the history of cultural studies through descriptors of pre- and post-1968. This nomenclature—apparent in Connell and Hilton's account of the last fifty years of cultural studies—references the shift in political tone that occurred in the wake of the year's events.¹ The language also demarcates an internal shift in the discipline that encouraged more outward-facing and direct politics that are not separate from, but a part of, the cultural studies project. This section gives a brief overview of global protest in 1968 to provide historical context for the task of cultural studies at the time.

As a symbol and reality of a tumultuous time, 1968 saw social movements that spanned continents and politics. The anti-nuclear movement, antiwar demonstrations, women's liberation movement, and global environmental movement all had major events and new beginnings in 1968 that contributed to the global cultural revolution with which cultural studies was attempting to come to terms as a discipline. Further, if it can be confined to a beginning and endpoint, 1968 is often considered the climax of the civil rights movement

in the US. In addition to student protests and occupations in Birmingham, the United States witnessed its share of student agitation led by similar paradigmatic disruptions in the humanities that made claims about the inseparability of politics, ethics, and academia. The accumulation of social protest was indicative of what was being called the New Left.² This Left steps away from democratic reform, without letting go of it completely, and instead opposes structural conditions of capitalism, racism, sexism, and war. Its focus on structures of oppression encourages political strategies and tactics that are direct, physical, and revolutionary.

Public memory in the United States often sees 1968 as a year of social upheaval, with college campuses and students in the center of the unrest. For example, the Columbia University protests in that year were in opposition to a segregated gymnasium and institutional support of the Vietnam War due to the university's membership in the International Defense Analyses, a weapon's research think tank. Students occupied several university buildings, held four hostages, and were forcibly removed by the New York City police.³ Additionally, the Weather Underground was formed on the organizational foundations of Students for a Democratic Society. Their national conventions between the years of 1968 and 1969 were the site of college students debating the merits of armed struggle versus passivity. Ultimately, the national council decided to go "underground," endorsing radical and disruptive tactics. Social movement historians mark this event as an endorsement of New Left politics, as college activists lost faith in reformist and electoral tactics for change.⁴

In line with the tone of the New Left, the Black Power movement was a radical flank of the civil rights movement that encouraged liberatory education reform, economic reparations, and in some cases Black separatism. Students and activists across the nation were becoming increasingly wary of peaceful protest. As the 1960s continued, the Black Power movement escalated toward revolutionary tactics. The year 1968 witnessed armed conflict between Panthers and police, nationwide arrests, and statewide repression of the Black Power movement.

Police actions during 1968 were indicative of state strategies policing social movements in the wake of unprecedented radical organization and student protests throughout the globe.⁵ It was later revealed that the FBI had files on Bob Feldman, who revealed Columbia's investment in weapons research. Further, a 1968 FBI memo showed that COINTELPRO was designed to police the Black Power movement and prevent it from gaining respectability among the public.⁶ 1968 was also the year the FBI tapped the phone of Fred Hampton, chairman of the Black Panther Party, whom they would later murder. It was also 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was planning the Poor People's Campaign and was assassinated. In Poland, the Government waged a propaganda campaign against student protest that labeled them Zionists and anti-Russian.⁷ In Mexico, student protests against military authoritarianism ended in the state army shooting over 100 students.⁸ In France, a student protest resulted in a general strike that state police met with violence before being overwhelmed.⁹ Indeed the general strike in France involved over a quarter of the population.¹⁰ 1968 was also the year of the Prague Spring Reforms, a some seven-month protest of the Soviet Union's attempt to suppress the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia liberalization reforms after Dubček's "socialism with a human face speech," wherein he argued for the need to decrease censorship and dismantle rule by repression while maintaining sound socialist economics. The USSR, in turn, occupied Czechoslovakia with over a half-million military personnel.¹¹

The details of domestic and global agitation in 1968 and their subsequent repression are numerous. Agitation was direct, and the responses throughout the year and afterward were just as material and physical on collegiate campus as it was throughout international

city squares. These social events and their political and material consequences presented new theoretical challenges for the discipline of cultural studies. What notions of culture, nation, race, and peoplehood were disrupted and/or solidified through these movements of revolutionary thought? How did subcultures and “deviants” constitute communities that negotiated norms of dominant culture? And what orders were being maintained by the state and mass-culture responses to protest? Dennis Dworkin explores the role cultural Marxism played in postwar Britain and argues that the *New Left Review*, edited by Stuart Hall, was a key instrument in distributing radical thought throughout colleges, internationally.¹² Though Dworkin traces cultural Marxism’s rise to prominence and descent to less relevance in the discipline throughout multiple years, it held major influence in the classrooms, student groups, and actions of organizers in 1968. Cultural studies was influenced by and influenced the political uprisings of the year.

Changes within the Centre at Birmingham

In 1968, the political setting and predicted distributions of power internationally were as uncertain as the future of cultural studies. Scholars had only recently taken up a serious analysis of culture in the late 1950s in Britain, and Centre reports indicate that within the discipline, scholars were still seeking to consolidate understandings of their innovative interdisciplinary scholarship.¹³ Student protests in Birmingham would continue to change the trajectory of the discipline. During a student occupation of Birmingham’s Great Hall in November and December of 1968, students demanded unity among faculty and students and complete democratization of the university, its content, and its future, including a shift in leadership at the CCCS. School authorities believed the Centre was behind much of this activity. Richard Hoggart, the CCCS founder and director, admits they were heavily involved in the protest activity at the time, with Hoggart himself taking part in a teach-in.¹⁴ This created a greater connection between what cultural studies scholars did in the academy and a critical praxis indicative of their scholarship. CCCS students recall the active sit in as a transformative moment for their intellectual work.¹⁵ This transformation is one that forwarded the same sort of global New Left ethos described above. The goal and imagination of radical reform became an increasing focus and possibility amongst the cultural studies discipline. Praxis became a focus and students were encouraged to engage in small scale actions that were representative of the same political commitments their academic work forwarded.¹⁶

In addition, the Centre itself underwent changes that directly influenced the direction of the discipline. The protests gave way to a concerted effort at CCCS meetings to incorporate student voices.¹⁷ Hall considered this an attempt to bring the students’ challenge to authority into the political arena of the CCCS and to better understand the possibilities of the Centre.¹⁸ The democratization led to student involvement in decision making, including involvement in the admissions process for new students applying to the CCCS program after current student interest in the process became evident.¹⁹ 1968 also acted as a critical point in time that moved cultural studies away from its Hoggartarian roots.²⁰ This was the same year that Hoggart resigned from CCCS for a position with UNESCO. Stuart Hall took Hoggart’s place at the Centre after an external review from the University, which Hoggart believed was prompted by published reports claiming the CCCS was “promoting left-wing propaganda.”²¹ Ultimately, a myriad of changes within the Centre itself mirrored the social unrest of the time, and created new directions for cultural studies scholarship and praxis.

Marginalized and Subaltern Cultural Studies

Larger questions brought forth by 1968’s social events continued to position cultural studies as a formative area in which interdisciplinary inquiry could widen and deepen

studies of power, dominance, and societal organization. This section examines the site of marginalized or subaltern cultural studies, which is an imperfect label for a subsection of a discipline that always and already denies formalization and elitism. In 1968, the anti-discipline of cultural studies was an emergent but smaller field; the CCCS had only been officially institutionalized four years earlier in 1964, and many of the Birmingham School's larger and well-known theorizations and critical contributions came later during the next two decades. Furthermore, the CCCS would influence cultural study of the subaltern in the following three decades.

Subaltern studies was born out of the impulse to bring together cultural studies and postcolonial studies within specific South Asian contexts. Founding editor of the *Subaltern Studies* publication and associated group Ranajit Guha expressed how rational critiques of postcolonial India expressed solely dominant perspectives on the state which obscured and denied the diverse existences and histories of the masses.²² To combat the elitist discourse and statist ideologies, the Subaltern Studies Group, based out of Sussex with contributors throughout the Indian diaspora from Oxford to Calcutta, published the first volume of the journal in 1982, ultimately seeking to represent the histories of the subaltern.²³ This group's critical recognition of the subversive role of the subaltern in rupturing traditional histories and practices of (inter)national elites inspired thinkers of a different context to create the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group in 1993.²⁴ This group, comprised of thinkers like John Beverley and Ileana Rodriguez, reconceptualized the nature of nation, state, and "the people" by examining the Mexican, Cuban, and Nicaraguan Revolutions.²⁵ In an ultimate critique of the state, the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group sought to consider and unveil alternative forms of territorialization, frontiers, regional logics, and pan-continental identities.²⁶ Both the South Asian and Latin American studies groups deeply problematized how subaltern peoples were represented within and between national ideologies.

Nevertheless, by 1968, cultural studies claimed a distinct purpose to describe and analyze the ways that ideology and hegemony permeate and construct culture.²⁷ "Founding fathers" Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams envisioned their own cultural project as an endeavor with a marginalized focus, as both Hoggart and Williams came from working-class backgrounds and felt at odds with the petit-bourgeois and middle-class cultures which surrounded them as academics.²⁸ Working papers in cultural studies demonstrate a commitment by scholars to studying this marginalization, including essays on working-class kids and career placement, Black labor and the working class in England, and women in the labor market, to name a few.²⁹ Hoggart particularly proposed cultural studies as a program to combat elitism within British education, specifically through deconstructing the hegemonic notion that "high culture" was more valuable than "everyday life."³⁰ The annual Centre report of 1968–69 demonstrates a wide variety of studies committed to this kind of everyday culture, including studies on popular music, serial radio drama, and contemporary genre fiction.³¹ In these ways, cultural studies at the time did have a focus on marginalization. In addition, due to some influence from the Frankfurt School, the early scholars at the Centre were committed to Marxist political aims and interpreted culture from a critical perspective, attending to structures of power and oppression.

However, although the stated intentions of cultural studies as an emancipatory, critical, and anti-disciplinarian project in 1968 seemed to center marginalized voices, cultures, and knowledges, the discipline had significant roots within the ivory towers of the European academe and, in many ways, implicitly assumed a Western perspective. Even our analysis thus far has centered a particular European institution, though we have grappled with global movements. In this same way, historic representations of the field of cultural studies often place the Birmingham School as *the* progenitor of the

epistemological project of critical cultural inquiry, which signifies a limited focus on Western institutions as arbiters of complete knowledge.³² Thus, much of the critical work from women and queer folk, people of color, colonized peoples, and other marginalized groups outside of the UK had not been integrated into the “cultural studies canon.” This critique does not mean that the Birmingham School was deliberately exclusionary; indeed, their research provided an important foundation for the understanding that mediated popular cultural messages bear political significance. As such, identifying marginalized cultural studies productively exposes the gaps and fragments in cultural studies histories, while affirming the institutional foundation provided by the Birmingham school.

Almost since its inception, contributors to the cultural studies project have criticized its limited perspectives on gender and women’s issues, race and ethnicity, colonialism, sexuality, and other experiences of oppression. Cultural studies is a contextual(ized) project where discussion of “cultural change” evolved over its course to attend to a wider range of social, historical, and material conditions.³³ Many of these significant changes happened after 1968; for example, Stuart Hall became the director of the Centre in 1969 and then began a larger role in coauthoring collective projects about racial identity, while the Women’s Studies Group formed in the next decade, in 1974. In the 1980s, the label of “cultural studies” was more easily adopted by scholars in Latin America, Africa, and Asia who developed their own sub-disciplines and thus added to the canon. Therefore, although the mainstream sense of cultural studies did not extend far beyond the United Kingdom in 1968, the epistemological tradition at the heart of the discipline was alive and roaring during that period. This argument links critical cultural study from African and Caribbean scholars pre-1968 (those outside the canon) to the growth of marginalized studies after 1968 (those within the canon).

In many nations both within and outside of the Western world, the tail end of the 1960s exemplified the turbulence of the decade. The postwar climate in the United States and the United Kingdom saw, in new and different ways, conversations about citizenship and race emerge within the national consciousness; while the civil rights protesters in the United States urged voting rights, Southeast Asian immigrants and the Windrush generation of Caribbean immigrants in the United Kingdom struggled to make the United Kingdom home amidst Powellian xenophobic ideals. While new social movements and civil rights movements disrupted social ideologies within the United States and the United Kingdom, the political climate within the Third World was fundamentally shaken by changes in power structures. The Cold War had multiple international effects across Asia and Latin America. The whole decade was a massive period of decolonization for many African nations, although South Africa still struggled with apartheid. Freedom fighters Che Guevara and Martin Luther King Jr. were murdered during these years (1967 and 1968 respectively), while social movements worked to strengthen and reinvent their legacies. These global moments would punctuate the critical consciousness of scholars who published after 1968 and trigger the development of new methodologies and analyses.

Scholars of marginalized and subaltern cultural studies who published after 1968 were attentive to the major cultural and political changes of the 1960s. As previously mentioned, the field expanded to include African, Asian, and Latin American subfields of cultural studies, as well as media studies, postcolonial and decolonial, feminist, and queer branches. However, critical work of the marginalized did not simply begin in the 1960s; many scholars had already been doing this work for decades before 1968. Theorists such as George Padmore, Claudia Jones, and the Negritude thinkers of the Francophone African diaspora theorized culture, power, and nation during the 1930s and 1940s. Marxist scholar and critical theorist C. L. R. James analyzed collective power, race, and

class in *World Revolution* and *Black Jacobins*. Psychiatrist and critical theorist Frantz Fanon and novelist and cultural studies scholar Sylvia Wynter wrote critical inquiries on the state of the colonized and the colonizer in the 1950s—which were taken up by later critical scholars like Paul Gilroy and Hazel Carby in the 1980s and 1990s. Later scholars in the 1980s, such as those in the Subaltern Studies Group at the University of Sussex, used a Foucauldian lens to problematize issues of colonialism and simply could not have done so before Foucault's publishing in the 1970s. Thus, ideas of anti-colonial organization and global racial order were not outside the realm of possibility for the discipline of cultural studies in 1968, but it would take at least ten more years for critical thinkers in the Western academy to build from that knowledge.

In 1968, the field of cultural studies had not existed for long, yet in many ways, it was growing into another form. The marginal and subaltern cultural studies scholars named here are not a comprehensive list, but rather, a preliminary identification of forms of knowledge outside the Western establishment that may align with what cultural studies came to be. As a contextual project, cultural studies still refuses canonization, but the canon must be interrogated nonetheless.

Influential and Representative Texts

A final way we trace the formation and identity of cultural studies within the year is to look briefly at texts that were meaningful to the discipline at the time. To do this, we connect Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech to cultural studies scholarship on race, nation, and identity. And next, we look at a short 1968 working paper on American hippies by Stuart Hall, which exemplifies the prevalent methods and topics of inquiry in the discipline at the time. These disparate texts demonstrate how cultural studies scholarship responded to the moment of 1968.

The volatile movements described previously and the changing demographics of a postwar Britain created the climate for Enoch Powell's speech known as "Rivers of Blood," which described from a dominant perspective how the world "seemed, for a moment at least, turned upside down" during that year.³⁴ However, the upside-down world that the speech lamented was not broader protests and social unrest; rather, it was the perceived backward nature of Britain's demographics and politics, wherein non-white immigrants were seen as threats to the nation's character and to the British way of life for native white Britons. The speech acted as a lynchpin in the discourse surrounding nationality and race about which certain strains of cultural studies were concerned. Therefore, we see "Rivers of Blood" as a key text of 1968 that impacted cultural studies because of its far-reaching consequences in political discourse to which cultural studies scholars responded with continued investigations into subcultures, deviancy, race, and nation. Cultural studies scholars took seriously their situated context and contributed their analyses of culture toward the understanding of the political moment that "Rivers of Blood" came to represent.

Enoch Powell delivered the infamous speech in Birmingham on April 20, 1968, at a meeting of the Conservative Political Centre. As Hickson noted, the speech—which victimized native English and cast immigrants from the West Indies, Africa, and Southeast Asia as villains—was not only infamous both for its content and for the fact that Powell circulated the speech to the press before its delivery.³⁵ The press's role in circulating the speech as well as reactions to the speech is indicative of many cultural studies scholars' work on media that was concerned with the effects of media on public opinion and perception, as well as the relationship between various types of mass media, such as newspaper, radio, and television. Media became an increasingly central concern for cultural studies, evidenced by many endeavors, including the overseas contacts listed in

the Centre's 1968–69 report to programs such as the Annenberg School of Communications, at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Centre d'Études des Communications de Masse at École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris.³⁶ The CCCS working papers also demonstrate such a commitment, through an entire section on studies of media, ranging from news making and crime to audience studies.³⁷

Cultural studies scholarship also intersected with this speech through inquiries of race and nationhood. In the speech, Powell spoke on behalf of the “thousands and hundreds of thousands” of silent people who felt similar anxiety and outrage about the rate of immigration and the changing racial demographics of England, which he called the nation “heaping up its own funeral pyre.” Immigrants, according to Powell, were hordes of aliens out to sabotage the nation's (racial) character, overtake communities, and benefit from the country's generosity. Ultimately, Powell presented himself as a prophet, able to foresee the consequences of the Race Relations Bill and integration as an eventual race war and the subjugation of ordinary and white English people.³⁸ The result was a doctrine of Powellism, which was both anti (non-white) immigrant and pro-national sovereignty.³⁹ Several scholars in cultural studies at this time had been examining both sentiments about these immigrant communities and the communities themselves. Notably, Stuart Hall's work intersected with nationalistic and xenoracist discourse from the perspective of the immigrant communities that Powell derided. In fact, Hall responded to Enoch Powell on the BBC series *Talkback* 8 days after the speech.⁴⁰ And his scholarship on Black British communities centralized Black Britons within the context of national racial anxiety that undergirded Powell's speech. Hall continued to publish work about the very communities Powell villainized, including “Black Britons: Some Teenage Problems” in 1970, “Black Britons, Part One: Some Problems of Adjustment” in 1970, and “Our Neighbors From the West Indies” in *Our Neighbors: Independent TV for schools* in 1971.⁴¹

Other scholars within cultural studies responded to the discourse that Powell's speech came to represent, too. The Centre's 1968–69 report mentions Janet Mendelson's continued study of immigrant subcultures and Jack Hailey's work on the language of immigrant children.⁴² Research in the CCCS Working Papers has been edited and thematized in a way that reflects the centrality of racial and national concerns. Exemplar texts from the collection, include Andy Green's “On the Political Economy of Black Labour and the Racial Structuring of the Working Class in England” and “The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race: The Experience of the Seventies,” which both seek to answer questions concerning the overall sociopolitical moment within which Powell spoke.⁴³

Finally, Powell's speech was representative of anxiety and moral panic felt in 1968 about deviant and subcultural groups.⁴⁴ His speech constructs the non-white immigrant as a deviant, which was a central concern for certain strands of cultural studies that centralized concerns of (cultural) deviancy. The National Deviancy Conference, formed in 1968 at University of York, was an important touchstone for cultural studies,⁴⁵ and (constructions of) deviancy continued to be a part of the cultural studies project, because deviancy so closely aligned with other commitments previously discussed, such as media (in promulgating ideological images and thus moral panic) as well as subcultures (who were constructed as deviant). Thus, Powell's speech importantly informed many areas of inquiry within cultural studies, including studies of deviancy, media, and national and racial identity.

A second paper indicative of cultural studies scholarship at the time and within the same discourse of nation and subculture is Stuart Hall's 1968 working paper, “The Hippies: An American ‘Moment.’”⁴⁶ This paper typifies work at the CCCS because it explicitly sought to articulate methods for researching cultural topics, it emerged in direct response to the

sociopolitical moment, and it was part of the working papers that scholars at the center self-published in incomplete form.

Cultural studies in 1968 pushed methodological boundaries to further understand the subjects of study. In 1969, Hoggart specifically identified the need for new languages or codes that could be used to better study society, which suggests that in 1968, scholars were still developing methods to suit their objects of study through their many disciplinary lenses.⁴⁷ In the 1970s, cultural studies began to look toward more linguistic structures, while sociological approaches developed for understanding the influence of media representations in society.⁴⁸ The working out of this methodology is evident in this unfinished version of Hall's paper. Hall undertook a phenomenological and thematic reading to generate an emic understanding of how hippies form a distinct cultural group. In the endnotes, Hall explicated his method in more detail. He called the two forces of his method the "phenomenological" moment and the "structuralist" moment. In the former, he sought to understand the Hippie meanings from the viewpoint of Hippies themselves, and through the latter, he made sense of those meanings through situating them within broader contexts. As seen through the 1966–67 Centre report, the bridging of studies of culture and society, the sociology of the arts, and critical evaluative studies was foundational to cultural studies and thus innovatively using the methods of these areas of study was also vital.⁴⁹ Seminars in the Centre focused methods of cultural analysis, as they helped bridge the gap between the methods of research in the various disciplines in which cultural studies was situated.⁵⁰

In "The Hippies: An American "Moment,"" Stuart Hall expanded upon a paper he had written in 1967 to analyze how the hippie style was "being brought more directly into play in the radical and political arena" and into the wider youth culture of the United States.⁵¹ The paper represents a version of cultural studies scholarship that is concerned with the marginalized. Hall understood the hippies as part of a large system of values and meanings in white American middle-class society. In this draft, he begins to articulate how hippies exist at the nexus of tensions and contradictions within the present value system—how they offer counter-definitions to social norms. True to cultural studies work at the time, this paper analyzes their meanings in various ways, such as their linguistic choices and their style of dress. He also interrogates their relation to minoritized groups, such as the poor and Native Americans, as well as dominant groups, such as middle-class white America, demonstrating how deviance is a social construction that relies on the complex relationship between subcultures and dominant cultures.⁵²

Ultimately, Hall's work in progress demonstrates the kind of work characteristic of cultural studies in 1968. It is a product of the social moment, and as it situates a subculture as a product of the sociopolitical context, it bolsters an analysis of macro structures with interrogations of micro communities and vice versa. The fact that Hall made this paper available to the scholarly community in its incomplete form also points to the democratic nature of the Centre at the time, which only deepened due to student protests of the year. A more complete version of the paper appears in the CCCS Working Papers collection, and the paper appeared the following year in *Student Power*.⁵³ Later, in 1971, he published "The Hippies: Dissent in America."⁵⁴ Ultimately, Hall saw hippies as an area of study of subcultural deviancy, which was a touchstone of cultural studies at the time. Hall is of course representative of cultural studies, although he resisted this kind of iconography throughout his career. This paper, even in its incomplete form in 1968, embodied much of the spirit and commitments of cultural studies at the time.

Conclusion

Only four years after the founding of the CCCS and the institutionalization of cultural studies, the discipline saw a critical turning point due to a wave of worldwide social movements that redefined not only left politics and conceptions of nation and identity but also the praxis and commitments of cultural studies. The year of 1968 demonstrates how the work of cultural studies cannot be separated from the sociopolitical moment. In this brief timeline, we have drawn together a representation of the discipline of cultural studies by means of the larger context of 1968. In doing so, we have shown how social movements at the Centre, areas of marginalized and subaltern study, and key texts are interrelated fragments that, when pieced together, help narrate how the identity of cultural studies was irrevocably influenced by the social reality of 1968. They also demonstrate how cultural studies responded to the moment with continued commitments to studies of marginalization, nation, race, deviancy, and media.

We understand the year of 1968 similarly to how cultural historian Kobena Mercer describes it—as a periodized moment in politics and identity, thus questioning “what is at stake in contemporary representations of 1968” that are subject to processes of “selective erasure and forgetting.”⁵⁵ We investigate these public memories incompletely, with the knowledge that cultural studies cannot be easily distilled and with the intention that further work can, and should, be done. Ultimately, we not only look backward but also to our present and future, as we ask what our own social moments (will) necessitate from our collective intellectual labor.

Notes

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